

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00
NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 SSC-01 AID-05 PC-01
HA-05 /072 W

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O R 281212Z FEB 78

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9834

INFO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL MADRAS

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 NEW DELHI 3199

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, IN

SUBJECT: CONGRESS (I) SWEEPS ANDHRA PRADESH; JANATA HAS
PLURALITY IN MAHARASHTRA

REF: (A) NEW DELHI 3129; (B) MADRAS 304 (NOTAL);
(C) BOMBAY 498 (NOTAL)

1. MRS. GANDHI'S CONGRESS (I) REPEATED ITS WINNING
PERFORMANCE IN THE OTHER SOUTHERN STATE OF KARNATAKA
(REFTEL A) BY CAPTURING A SOLID MAJORITY IN THE ANDHRA
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PRADESH STATE ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS. THE JANATA PARTY
CAME IN SECOND AND THE CONGRESS (R) WAS A DISTANT
THIRD. WITH ONE CONTEST YET TO BE ANNOUNCED, THE
LINE-UP FOR THE ANDHRA ASSEMBLY'S 294 SEATS IS:

CONGRESS (I) 175

JANATA 60

CONGRESS (R) 30

CPM 8
CPI 5
INDEPENDENTS 15

2. NO PARTY HAS WON A CLEAR MAJORITY IN MAHARASHTRA, ALTHOUGH THE JANATA HAS SECURED A PLURALITY. WITH TWO SEATS NOT YET DECLARED, THE PARTY POSITION FOR THE ASSEMBLY'S 288 SEATS IS:

JANATA 98
CONGRESS (R) 69
CONGRESS (I) 62
PEASANTS AND
WORKERS PARTY
(PWP) 13
CPM 9
CPI 1
OTHERS AND
INDEPENDENTS 34

3. ONLY ABOUT TWO THIRDS OF THE 126 CONTESTS HAVE BEEN ANNOUNCED IN ASSAM THUS FAR, BUT JANATA IS CLEARLY IN THE LEAD. THE BREAKDOWN OF THE 81 RESULTS DECLARED IS:

JANATA 33
CONGRESS (R) 16
CONGRESS (I) 8
CPM 7
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CP (MARXIST-
LENINIST) 1
CPI 6
INDEPENDENTS
AND OTHERS 10

4. RESULTS FROM THE TWO NORTHEASTERN STATES ARE STILL SKETCHY.

5. CONGEN MADRAS EVALUATES THE CONGRESS (I) VICTORY IN ANDHRA PRADESH AS A STUNNING UPSET. MUCH OF THE PARTY'S SUCCESS IN KARNATAKA WAS DUE TO DEVRAJ URS, BUT IN ANDHRA THE VICTORY IS ENTIRELY MRS. GANDHI'S. (THIS VIEW IS ALSO SHARED AMONG OBSERVERS IN DELHI.) APPARENTLY, THE POOR AND BACKWARD CLASSES REGARDED THE ELECTION AS A REFERENDUM ON MRS. GANDHI HERSELF, AND HER 20-POINT PROGRAM APPEARS TO HAVE FAR OUTWEIGHED ANY EMERGENCY "EXCESSES" IN THEIR MINDS. THE OUTCOME IS ALL THE MORE REMARKABLE BECAUSE MANY CONGRESS (I) CANDIDATES WERE VIRTUAL UNKNOWNNS RUNNING AGAINST THE WELL-ESTABLISHED ORGANIZATION OF CONGRESS (R).

(A) ALTHOUGH IF KFARED SLIGHTLY BETTER
THAN IN NEIGHBORING KARNATAKA, THE CONGRESS (R)'S

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9835
INFO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
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AMEMBASSY KABUL
AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMCONSUL BOMBAY
AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
AMCONSUL MADRAS
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 NEW DELHI 3199

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

DISMAL THIRD-PLACE FINISH MAY HAVE
ELIMINATED IT AS A POLITICAL FORCE
IN ANDHRU. CONGEN MADRAS NOTES THAT WHERE THE CONTEST
WAS BETWEEN THE TWO CONGRESSES, VOTERS PREFERRED THE CONGRESS
(I); WHERE IT WAS BETWEEN CONGRESS (R) AND JANATA, THE JANATA
WON. IT IS OBVIOUS THAT FORMER CHIEF MINISTER VENGALA RAO'S
POPULAR SUPPORT WAS DIRECTLY RELATED TO
MRS. GANDHI. WHEN HE ABANDONED HER, HE LOST MASS APPEAL.
(B) JANATA'S EXPANDED FOOTHOLD IN ANDHRA
IS OF SILIGHT COMFORT. ITS LOCAL LEADER-
SHIP AHD EXPECTED TO DO BETTER AND THE
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RESULTS IN THE TWO SOUTHERN STATES INDICATES THAT THE PARTY HAS LITTLE STRENGTH IN THE SOUTH. WHAT SUPPORT IT GATHERED CAME MAINLY FROM URBAN AREAS. JANATA'S RELIANCE ON CONGRESS DEFECTORS AS ITS CANDIDATES, AS WELL AS ITS ATTEMPTS AT CASTE POLITICS, LARGELY BACKFIRED.

(C) IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THE ANDHRA VICTORY SURPRISED EVEN THE CONGRES (I). CURRENT SPECULATION IS THAT DR. M. CHENNA REDDY, PRESIDENT OF THE STATE CONGRESS (I) UNIT AND FORMER GOVERNOR OF UP, IS THE LEADING CANDIDATE FOR THE CHIEF MINISTERSHIP WHEN THE LEGISLATORS MEET ON MARCH 3. (IN KARNATAKA, DEVRAJ URS WAS SWORN IN AS CHIEF MINISTER FEBRUARY 28.)

6. ACCORDING TO CONGEN BOMBAY, THE SINGLY MOST OBVIOUS TREND IN MAHARASHTRA WAS THE REGIONAL NATURE OF THE VOTING, AN INDICATION THAT NONE OF THE MAJOR PARTIES HAS TRULY STATE WIDE APPEAL. EACH OF THE THREE TOOK THE BULK OF ITS VICTORIES FROM A SINGLE GEOGRAPHICAL AREA, WITH SCATTERED WINS ELSEWHERE. JANATA SWEEPED THE COASTAL REGION, INCLUDING ALL OF THE SEATS IN BOMBAY, WHILE MRS. GANDHI'S CONGRESS (I) ESTABLISHED ITS BASE IN THE EASTERN VIDARBHA REGION. CONGRESS (R) WAS RESTRICTED TO THE SOUTHERN SUGAR COOPERATIVE BELT.

(A) CONGRESS (R) WAS CLEARLY THE HEAVY LOSER IN MAHARASHTRA. THE RESULTS ARE A MAJOR BLOW TO PARLIAMENTARY PARTY LEADER Y. B. CHAVAN, WHO WAS UNABLE TO ORGANIZE A CONGRESS VICTORY IS A STATE LONG CONSIDERED TO BE HIS PERSONAL

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STRONGHOLD. MRS. GANDHI, ON THE OTHER HAND, SHOWED THAT EVEN WITH MINIMAL ORGANIZATION HER CHARISMA IS CONSIDERABLE. SHE ALSO ACHIEVED HER OBJECTIVE OF DEMONSTRATING THAT IN MAHARASHTRA, AT LEAST, CONGRESS WITHOUT INDIRA IS NOT A DOMINANT FORCE.

(B) ATTENTION NOW FOCUSES ON FORMING A GOVERNMENT IN MAHARASHTRA. JANATA'S ELECTORAL ALLIES, (PWP, CPM AND TWO SMALLER PARTIES) TOGETHER WON 27 SEATS. THESE TAKEN WITH JANATA'S 98 SEATS STILL FALL SHORT OF THE 145 SEATS

NEEDED FOR A MAJORITY. CONGEN BOMBAY BELIEVES
THAT INTENSE BEHIND-THE- SCENES HORSE-TRADING
WILL OCCUR IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS AS JANATA
SEEKS TO ATTRACT ENOUGH ADDITIONAL SUPPORT
FROM INDEPENDENTS AND OTHERS TO FORM A GOVERNMENT.
A COALITION OF TACIT UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN
JANATA AND CONGRESS (R) SEEMS UNLIKELY AT PRESENT,
BUT CANNOT BE RULED OUT.

7. RESULTS FROM ASSAM ARE STILL TOO IMCOMPLETE TO
SPECULATE ON GOVERNMENT FORMATION THERE. JANATA IS
LEADING THE OTHER PARTIES, BUT STILL NEEDS TO WIN 31
SEATS TO GAIN A CLEAR MAJORITY. ONE INTERESTING ASPECT
OF THE ASSAM POLL IS THAT THE CPM APPARENTLY HAS NOT
MADE THE BREAKTHROUGH WHICH SOME OBSERVERS HAD FORE-
CAST.
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